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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Coombs (New Zealand), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/38, A/45/426, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270; A/C.3/45/5)

AGENDA ITEM 102: FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN TO THE YEAR 2000 (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/347, A/45/489, A/45/548; A/C.3/45/5)

1. Ms. ZABOLAI-CSEKME (International Labour Organisation) said that the magnitude of the problem of female heads of households was underrated. Research showed that roughly one third of the world's families were de facto headed by a woman. Most of those families belonged to the most disadvantaged segments of society because many societies were guided by outdated perceptions of reality, according to which women did not have to earn an income, or if they did, theirs was a secondary income. Consequently, those societies failed to prepare women for the world of work; the result was that one third of the world's children, male and female, were likely to be doomed to deprivation. As a result of the socio-economic context in which they lived, those children might drop out of school and, as young adults, experience early pregnancies, turn to drugs or commit criminal acts.

2. ILO was convinced that the advancement of women was a matter of human rights and also of sound economic and social policies. The elimination of discrimination against women should be an important part of policies for eradicating poverty and fostering equitable socio-economic development. Recognizing that, ILO had, in recent years, changed both major spheres of its activities, i.e., the development and application of international labour standards and the design and implementation of technical co-operation activities.

3. With regard to international labour standards, it had shifted the emphasis from the protection of women to the promotion of equality. By fostering protection of male and female workers in a context of equal opportunity and treatment, it was responding more to the various inter-related needs of women workers. In that context, she drew attention to the ILO Convention on night work, adopted in June 1990. Instead of prohibiting night work for women, and thereby excluding them from employment opportunities, the Convention promoted equality of opportunity together with specific rights of protection. By furthering the application of international labour standards, ILO was making an important contribution to promoting the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

4. ILO had also changed its perception of operational activities concerning women. While women's specific projects were still being implemented, its long-range objective was to design mainstream development projects so as to guarantee the advancement of women by means of equal opportunity and treatment in

(Ms. Zabolai-Csekme, ILO)

training and employment. ILO had noted with concern that, while the number of women workers was constantly increasing, most of them were still employed in low-skill, low-pay, low-status occupations with little job security and many occupational hazards. It had also noted that, in many countries, unemployment was much higher among women than among men. As for self-employment, women were again disadvantaged owing to their limited access to skills, credit and technologies. Consequently, many women were channelled into informal-sector activities, usually characterized by a minimum input and a minimum income. ILO's activities were concentrated, therefore, on promoting employment for women, mainly in rural areas. With regard to training, the emphasis was laid on women in small enterprise development and management, the acquiring by women of skills of labour-market value and the training of women engaged in the informal sector or rural activities. ILO also carried out activities concerning women in workers' and employers' organizations.

5. ILO was contributing to implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and collaborating closely with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

6. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that the international community had been addressing the problems of women since the beginning of the century but its progress had been very modest. So far as decision-making in political and parliamentary life was concerned, although women constituted one half of the world's population, they accounted for only 13 per cent of the membership in parliamentary bodies. Because of the existing inequalities in political life, women were not allowed to make their necessary contribution to the establishment of democratic structures. In the employment market, when women became wage-earners, they did not receive equal treatment; moreover, the failure to upgrade them in the social and occupational hierarchy was attributed to their family duties.

7. Discrimination against women must be attacked at the source. Studies showed that the preference given to male children in traditional - and even in modern - societies, perpetuated discrimination against girls throughout their lifetime and in every area of activity. Unfortunately, most women encouraged that discrimination, partly because of the belief that only boys carried on the family name and tradition and provided economic security for their parents in old age. Education and training were essential for preparing girls for an active life that would allow them a degree of economic independence and in which society would grant them recognition and respect. While proper education could eliminate the prejudices that began in childhood, it was a luxury in many countries. That fact only served to widen the gulf between women in the third world and women in economically prosperous countries. Women throughout the world suffered discrimination, but the priorities that concerned them depended on the stage of development attained by their countries. The environment was a case in point. While women in the industrialized world were involved in environmental protection, their sisters in the third world earned their living from the bounty of nature. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would no

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(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

doubt demonstrate the impact of underdevelopment on the environment and the involuntary participation of women in its deterioration.

8. She congratulated UNIFEM on the projects it was carrying out in developing countries, including Africa, and urged the Fund to continue its policy of supporting development projects which directly involved women and could serve as models. The fact that Governments were resorting to the Fund was encouraging and she hoped that the experience of the Fund would be of use to the international financial agencies, as well as to the specialized agencies concerned, and that the Fund would receive technical co-operation from as many countries and agencies as possible.

9. Another issue receiving a great deal of attention was physical and mental violence; the problem seemed minor, however, as compared with female circumcision, a traditional practice which affected the physical and sometimes the psychological health of nearly 75 million women in developing countries. Every year, that practice affected millions of young girls from the age of six onwards, because of the lack of information, education and training. Sometimes there seemed to be no willingness to implement sound policies for ending such practices.

10. The issue of equal pay and equal access to employment made little sense to women who could not find work or who, in the rural areas, laboured continuously for 18 to 20 hours every day just to survive. In one survey carried out in India, peasant women had been asked to define good health; they had responded: "To finish the day without feeling exhausted". That was an unattainable goal, for example, for women in some of the arid regions of the third world who had to walk for several miles every day to find water which they carried in vessels weighing over 20 kilos.

11. With regard to the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, the 30 per cent target established by the General Assembly had not been reached because of the failure of States to submit female candidatures. While there had been considerable improvement in the situation of equality under the law, in most countries that progress had not been followed up with concrete action.

12. She noted with satisfaction that the enlargement of the Commission on the Status of Women had not affected its work or its consensus on the major problems affecting women. The presence of representatives of developing countries on the Commission would enable it to determine the priorities that really needed attention and to study the underlying causes of many problems, such as those affecting young women, elderly women and disabled women. The situation of migrant women and women heads of family must also be improved, and recommendations should be drawn up for the attention of Governments.

13. She welcomed the work being done by the Division for the Advancement of Women, particularly the seminar of September 1990 which had offered an opportunity for experts from many different countries to discuss the current situation and to exchange information on their own countries' experiences. Once again, it had become evident that statistics and data collection were inadequate and some States

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were not reporting on the obstacles to its implementation.

14. Women's issues must be viewed in the broader perspective of human rights. In the developing countries, the economic, social and cultural advancement of women was vital to their full enjoyment of political rights. That question should be discussed at the forthcoming conference on women to be held in 1995. That conference should be held in a country where women were particularly vulnerable to economic, social and cultural discrimination. As the last three conferences had been held in Europe, in Latin America and Africa, it was only fair that the next one should be held in Asia. She had been surprised to note that the Secretariat had violated the usual procedure, based on prior consultation with the States Parties which were the only ones having the authority to decide on the site of an international conference. The Secretariat's argument that the conference should be held at the Vienna headquarters was not valid, nor had it been valid in the past in the case of the other conferences. If the Secretariat decided to treat States as inferiors or to bring up arguments of a financial, economic and material nature, it would only be confirming the prejudice which the international community had been trying to combat for nearly 90 years.

15. Mr. ALLAFI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that successful social and economic development required the full participation of women and hence legal recognition of their equality with men. Putting that recognition into practice was a problem in most of the developing and developed countries. Women should participate actively in decision-making regarding their problems. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, vigorous efforts had been made to inform women of their rights and role in society. Material and moral incentives and constant encouragement from the leadership of the Revolution to participate in critical decision-making had helped Libyan women to overcome all obstacles and succeed in all cultural, social and economic fields.

16. The ambitious programmes of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women aimed at achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women, "Equality, Development and Peace", had met with numerous obstacles. The international community should take steps to revive the Strategies in order to achieve the desired goals by the end of the century. The proposed 1995 world conference on women would be an excellent opportunity to assess what had been achieved and to decide on additional measures. His country supported the principle of geographical alternation for the venue of such a conference, while welcoming the invitation of Austria.

17. The Commission on the Status of Women was the most appropriate body for co-ordinating preparations for the conference. He supported the priority themes to be considered by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session in 1991, but hoped that the Commission would also consider the hitherto ignored category of women labouring under occupation and racism, and in particular, the case of women in occupied Palestine and in South Africa. He appealed to the conscience of women across the world to respond to the call for justice and solidarity with the oppressed women in

(Mr. Allafi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Palestine and South Africa in their struggle to defend their usurped human dignity and basic rights. They had been prevented from participating in international efforts to achieve "equality, development and peace". The international community should assume its responsibilities to protect those women and take the necessary steps to eliminate all causes of their suffering, such as occupation, settlements and racism.

18. Mr. KHOSHROO (Iran), welcomed the invitation of the Government of Austria to host the world conference on women in 1995.

19. The approach towards women and their standing in society should be changed in order to strengthen family ties and lay the foundation for enabling women to participate in establishing a new and sound society. One of the indisputable rights of women was to enjoy a healthy family atmosphere in childhood, appropriate health care, training during adolescence and an enduring family relationship. Elderly women must be cared for and not deprived of a warm family environment. The breaking up of the family, high divorce statistics and the resulting ethical and psychological effects were not conducive to the participation of women in society. The manipulation of women in their youth and the neglect of middle-aged and elderly women had deprived them of their inalienable rights. Today's mass media often disgraced women by presenting them as sellers of commodities or for sexual pleasure.

20. In Iran, the family was the focal point for the growth and promotion of human beings, and it was the duty of the Government to promote establishment of that fundamental unit. The Iranian Constitution emphasized the equality of rights of men and women, and stipulated that every citizen should enjoy equal protection under the law and was entitled to all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Islamic precepts. The Government guaranteed women's rights according to Islamic criteria and created the conditions for forming the character of women and restoring their material and spiritual rights; for the support of mothers (in particular during pregnancy), child care, and the protection of children who had no guardians; for establishing a competent family court; and for introducing insurance for widows and elderly and needy women.

21. Women had played an important part in the Revolution. Their role in determining the type of Government had been unprecedented and their participation in elections and social, political and cultural activities was further proof of their status in society. Their perseverance in encouraging their husbands and sons to defend the territorial integrity of the country was a source of pride for all Iranians. Women were serving as members of parliament and in many other administrative and executive functions, including teaching in universities and schools. They were also active in the research, industrial, medical and agricultural fields. In the economic sectors, they played an important role in handicraft and light industries; for instance, their contribution was much greater than men's in carpet manufacturing, the second most important export industry.

22. More international co-operation was needed to maintain the characteristics and grace of women and their increasing participation in the cultural, economic and political fields. His delegation was ready to co-operate in every effort towards achieving those objectives.

23. Mrs. MONACO (Italy) remarked that implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies had slowed down in many countries. That was true for Italy, where women had already achieved a large measure of equality in legislative positions, and it was they who must work to eliminate inequalities and discrimination.

24. Italy was promoting numerous mechanisms for women's participation, the most recent being the Commission for Equality between Men and Women, established under a an act of Parliament which stated that the mechanisms for promoting the rights of women should have sufficient financial resources for carrying out their task. Among other achievements the Commission had organized a meeting between its officers and the heads of all national political parties and had obtained a commitment to include more women in the electoral lists and ensure that more women were elected. A number of regional, provincial and local committees had been set up under the governmental Commission and most ministries had set up committees to promote equality for women in all fields of public life, including education, employment and career opportunities. Counsellors on equality for women had been appointed at national, regional and provincial levels to supervise application of the principle of non-discrimination. A Bureau for Women had recently been established in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to co-ordinate, organize and promote projects for women in the developing countries.

25. Italy's efforts were directed towards achieving de jure and especially de facto equality. Her Government was endeavouring to create a permanent link between women's organizations and Italian women and, to that end, had launched an extensive national and regional information and awareness campaign through the mass media.

26. Mr. AL-BADI (Oman) said that women were the backbone of the family and as such their participation and the upgrading of their educational, health and social level was essential for development. Numerous programmes concerned with welfare, education, health and legislation involved Omani women actively in development. With regard to welfare, women were encouraged to take training in rehabilitation and child care centres in order to cope with household problems. A non-governmental Omani women's association had been established for women's social and cultural improvement, charity schemes and family planning guidance. It also promoted hygiene and helped to publicize hygiene among the bedouin. Branches of the association had been opened in most parts of the country.

27. Education was a basic right of all citizens without distinction. Omani women had equal opportunities with men in the institutions of higher education; before 1970 there had not been a single girls' school in Oman.

28. As for health services, Omani women received preventive medicine and treatment, and maternity and child-care services were provided by clinics throughout the Sultanate; those clinics also helped to spread health awareness.

29. Omani legislation ensured equal employment opportunities for women and granted them maternity and child-care leave. Omani women enjoyed joint ownership rights in

(Mr. Al-Badi, Oman)

accordance with Islamic Shariah law. Oman had participated actively in numerous international activities and conferences on women, and had hosted the Fourth Regional Conference on Women in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. Thanks to the radical changes which had taken place under the leadership of Sultan Qaboos, Omani women had progressed to work as nurses, doctors, teachers, police officers, diplomats and politicians with full rights and as influential members of society.

30. Mr. OSNATCH (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) welcomed the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women had adopted a long-range programme making it possible to consider women's problems as a global humanitarian problem, while keeping in mind the unity of the three main purposes of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies: equality, development, and peace. In recent years the work of the Commission had become more practical, with special focus on the formerly controversial question of peace. The way was thus open for broader participation by women in the adoption of political and economic decisions at various levels.

31. The report in document A/45/489 revealed that substantial contributions had been made to the Strategies by a number of United Nations bodies, indicating that the status of women had become a priority for the international community. At the same time, the Commission had concluded that, although some progress was being made, a combination of economic and political obstacles had delayed progress to such an extent that achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi was at risk. Ways must be found to overcome the obstacles impeding implementation of the Strategies, strengthen national machinery, and establish relevant special programmes.

32. His delegation shared the Commission's concern regarding the status of women. One useful measure that might be taken to develop co-operation would be to disseminate positive national and international experience, especially with regard to the establishment of relevant international standards.

33. The principle of equality of men and women had been proclaimed in one of the first legislative instruments of the Ukrainian SSR . Consequently, for many years the people had taken it for granted that the question of women's status had been resolved once and for all. While the intention had been to ensure equal rights for men and women, in practice the rights had not always been exercised. That situation had slowed down the process of solving problems which were further aggravated by social and political upheavals also affecting the status of women. While constitutional provisions and more than 40 laws existed to protect women's rights and interests, women in the Ukrainian SSR were inadequately protected at the social level. In the Ukrainian SSR 92 per cent of women worked or studied; yet at the same time they had considerable household chores because an equitable division of labour within the family was not yet the norm. The social infrastructure was weak. Health protection for women and children was inadequate, as was the participation of women in the preparation and taking of political decisions.

34. Perestroika had made it necessary to interest the people more keenly in serious qualitative changes affecting the status of women; but it had also been necessary to inculcate new political and economic thinking in the women

(Mr. Osnatch, Ukrainian SSR)

themselves. That had involved both a thorough review of the legislation on the social protection of women and the fomulation of new policies.

35. Major measures to protect the health of women and children in regions affected by the Chernobyl accident had included the reallocation of whole families and pregnant women, full compensation and provision of proper housing in the new areas. Other welfare measures for women and children had cost 1.25 billion roubles in the period 1990-1992. Hundreds of thousands of women and children had not been fully safeguarded from health hazards and his delegation was grateful for the assistance provided, and appealed for further help.

36. At the first session of the Ukrainian Parliament a special committee on women's affairs and protection of the family, motherhood and children had been set up to formulate a long-range programme reflecting the principles of the Convention and of the Forward-looking Strategies.

37. Those and other matters regarding the social, economic and political situation of women in the Ukrainian SSR had been described by his country's representatives at the very productive ninth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Convention had become one of the main international instruments in the field of human rights. His delegation supported its articles and trusted that they would become universally recognized. It looked forward to continued co-operation with the Committee, as was confirmed by the withdrawal of his country's reservation regarding article 29, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

38. One important contribution to popularization of the Convention had been made by the Kiev seminar. His Government and social and women's organizations had striven to ensure the success of the seminar, and had provided highly constructive inputs. Implementation of the recommendations of the seminar would help to strengthen national, regional and international mechanisms for improving the status of women.

39. His delegation attached the highest importance to implementation of the proposal to convene an international conference on women's problems in 1995, and was convinced that that conference would ensure that the necessary priority was assigned to implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. It also supported the proposal to include women's problems in the International Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

40. Mrs. MULINDWA-MATOVU (Uganda) said that the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (A/45/489) gave due attention to the plight of vulnerable groups of women, such as the disabled, the elderly, the young and migrant women, as well as female heads of households, who faced additional hardship and prejudice. In developing countries, such as Uganda, those difficulties were aggravated by stiffer competition than elsewhere, because of deep-rooted attitudes. Worse still, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for almost 4 million, or nearly one third of the world's officially recognized refugees, and

(Mrs. Mulindwa-Matovu, Uganda)

12 million displaced persons, a large percentage of all those being women and children. Uganda commended the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on their efforts, but all vulnerable categories still needed further attention.

41. It was unfortunate that, despite progress in the legislative field - 104 States were now parties to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and many States had enacted their own laws and regulations in line with the Convention - implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies was encountering obstacles. In many parts of the world, economic stagnation made it difficult to maintain the educational system, and education was the prerequisite for the advancement of women. With the approach of the year 2000 positive action to implement the Forward-looking Strategies must be intensified and her delegation supported the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15.

42. Improvement of the status of women was a priority for the Government of Uganda. The Ministry of Women in Development had been established to encourage women's access to policy formulation and programme planning and implementation. The Ugandan Ministry of Planning and Economic Development had supported the integration of women's needs and concerns in development planning by instructing planning units in other ministries to give greater attention to women in project formulation, and by allowing the Ministry of Women in Development to review projects from other ministries regarding the adequacy of women's participation. An analysis undertaken by UNIFEM in 1988, at the request of the Ugandan Government, had identified project concepts including the promotion of food security, the improvement of the co-ordinating and revenue capacity of the National Council for Women, and the credit scheme for productive activities for women. The Fund had also financed a number of useful studies, and a follow-up mission had resulted in an agreement between the Fund and the relevant institutions to design a project for assisting and strengthening the National Council of Women, defining a credit finance project and conducting a survey on opportunities for women in food technologies. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) had already signed an agreement to reinforce existing credit schemes and to provide development funds to cover women's credit needs and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had indicated its interest in food processing technologies. Uganda was grateful for all the financial and other support it had received, but the achievement of equal status for women would ultimately depend on the unwavering collective commitment of women themselves.

43. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea) said that the nature of the problems encountered by women were dictated by the social, economic, cultural and political systems in different societies, and some of the problems were found in both developed and developing countries. Despite efforts by Governments to develop policies to improve the status of women, the problems persisted.

44. In Papua New Guinea, 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, so that women continued to be involved in subsistence food production as well as

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

raising children. While his country appreciated the importance of customs and traditional values, it was equally important to establish an effective mechanism for implementing national government policies in education, health, child care, sex education and family planning to improve the quality and level of women's participation throughout the world.

45. His Government recognizing the disadvantaged position of women and their role in national development, had called for a rapid increase in equal and active participation by women in all forms of economic, social, political and cultural activities. The Government's national development strategy had been introduced in 1976 and the Constitution had a clear provision for equal participation by women in all aspects of society. Women and men received equal pay for equal work and women were entitled to claim head-of-household status where a husband had a lower salary or was unemployed or if the woman was a single parent. Bottle-feeding was discouraged and legislation had been enacted to encourage breast-feeding, for which mothers were entitled to time off at work. Married women could now contribute to and claim retirement benefits.

46. The need for a clear policy on women had been recognized in 1978 and the Government had developed a policy for creating an environment conducive to integrating women both as beneficiaries and as participants in development. It placed responsibilities on a number of key Government departments to review and plan policies and programmes so that the impact on women was considered before such activities were implemented.

47. His country continued to support UNIFEM, whose programme had served as a catalyst in facilitating women's programmes in various regions. Its modest Asia/Pacific programme had been useful to Governments and non-governmental organizations in making their national plans and programmes more gender-responsive. A recent feasibility study on credit schemes for women showed his Government's commitment to improving women's access to resources and development project assistance. His Government had also established a national communications network to improve national and provincial offices, mobilize women in policy-making areas and encourage co-operation at the local level.

48. Miss GANE-BANG (Chad) said that in many regions of the world, women, the silent majority, suffered hunger, fear and violence day after day, but identifying the trouble would not cure it. Chad was resolutely pursuing a policy for the effective advancement of women and had set itself a number of objectives, including the promotion of women's access to decision-making bodies by ensuring equality of opportunity in education and employment, and providing social and health education and maternal and child care for all. That policy was provided for in articles 36 and 37 of the Constitution of 10 December 1989. The will to allow women to participate actively in national life had been reaffirmed in a declaration by the President of the Republic. In the elections of 8 July 1990 five seats had been reserved for women and there were seven women in the National Assembly.

(Miss Gane-Bang, Chad)

49. Activities for the advancement of women over the past few years included National Women's Week which had become an annual event. In April 1990, a seminar on the integration of women in the trade-union movement had made a number of recommendations to national authorities and international organizations on subjects including ratification of international charters and conventions on women; providing an up-to-date family code; increasing the number of women in trade-union decision-making organs; organizing campaigns to change backward attitudes that hampered the advancement of women; and organizing national, regional and international meetings and seminars.

50. Chad appreciated the support given by organizations in the United Nations system, in particular UNICEF and UNIFEM. However, for a country where the majority - who were women - lived in rural areas, illiterate and untrained, much remained to be done. Her Government therefore proposed to organize a round table on the status of women in 1991, in co-operation with UNIFEM, UNDP and the World Bank. Sectoral talks on health and social affairs would be held in 1991 under the auspices of the African Development Bank and the World Health Organization.

51. The adoption of legal instruments for the advancement of women would not have any impact unless they were backed up by action and political will. Action was urgent but ultimately it was the women themselves who must show the will to achieve equality. Development seemed further away because of the economic crisis in the developing countries, which was aggravated by the austerity imposed by structural adjustment whose main victims were women. In the light of those factors, efforts to improve the quality of life for women seemed illusory.

52. Ms. VALLE (Cuba), referring to the three priority fields of the United Nations Decade for Women, said that, while some progress had been made in equality, in much of the world the day-to-day situation of women was far from satisfactory. Women continued to be discriminated against at work, in the family, and in society as a whole. Obvious inequalities persisted in areas such as pay and work conditions, and the political decisions necessary to rectify the situation had not been taken. With regard to development, it was clear that the economic crisis, the external debt, socio-economic imbalances and the deterioration in the terms of trade all militated against the advancement of women. With regard to peace, while armed conflicts, foreign intervention and the threat of aggression persisted, women would continue to suffer.

53. Her delegation welcomed the fact that 104 States had now ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nevertheless, discrimination against women remained an important and persistent problem, in dealing with which Governments and the United Nations must take account of the economic, social, cultural and other factors.

54. Her delegation concurred with the views, expressed in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/489), that there had been some progress, but that the effects of various economic, political and social factors had hampered women's advancement, and that the objectives of the Strategies were seriously threatened. To counter

(Ms. Valle, Cuba)

that trend, efforts must be made to guarantee the best possible opportunities for education, training and equal participation by women in economic and political life. The international community must work towards implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies over the next five years. UNIFEM was making important contributions in various regions of the world, promoting substantial technical assistance projects in the developing countries.

55. Her delegation reiterated its support for the recommendation to hold a world conference in 1995 for reviewing progress in implementation of the Nairobi Strategies.

56. Early in 1990, Cuba had hosted the ministerial meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the role of women in development which had continued the work begun by other conferences and meetings of the Non-Aligned Countries in that area.

57. The revolutionary process in Cuba had made a significant contribution to the development of women's full human potential. For the first time in the country's history, women had become, not only beneficiaries of great social changes, but also protagonists in the process of transforming society. Thousands of Cuban women contributed their professional skills to the nation's progress. Women represented 38.7 per cent of the total workforce, and 58.3 per cent of skilled workers.

58. The revolution had sought to ensure that Cuban mothers participated fully in working and educational life. As early as 1961, creches had been set up to enable women to work and provide a full educational programme for children from earliest infancy. Sixty-one per cent of pre-university students were female, and women accounted for 55 per cent of university enrolment. In political life, women occupied 26.5 per cent of leading political posts, and were increasingly represented in the most important political organs and institutions.

59. Mrs. BUTIKO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the success of development programmes and the implementation of policies depended on the extent to which women were free to make decisions affecting their lives. Five years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, it was inexcusable that women, who constituted half the world's population and put in two thirds of working hours, were unequally rewarded in comparison with their male counterparts. Women grew half the food supply in many countries but received one tenth of the wages. Their activities were related mainly to farming, domestic chores and reproduction, but they were the first to starve in times of crisis. They had two jobs: in the home and outside the home, but hitherto much of their work had been unrecognized. As a result, their health and their work suffered, their children suffered and development was retarded. In most countries, women owned only 1 per cent of property.

60. One of the most important imperatives was to ensure literacy and schooling for girls and women. Tanzania had achieved universal primary education for school-age children of both sexes but, while enrolment figures were equal, not all girls

(Mrs. Butiko, Tanzania)

completed primary school. In secondary education fewer girls were enrolled than boys, which was attributed to shortcomings in the educational system inherited with independence. In advanced secondary schools and colleges, and in training institutions and universities, enrolment of girls was much lower that that of boys.

61. The Government realized the importance of education, training, information, literacy and extension services as a means of enabling women to participate fully and effectively in development and help to change attitudes towards equality, but the planning and implementation of such programmes were subject to constraints, such as the traditional planning system which was not gender-sensitive, cultural and customary attitudes, and limited resources. Thus women, especially those in rural areas, were still disadvantaged. Enhancement of the autonomy and economic status of women called for multiple strategies to remove legal barriers to credit, land and other means of production, as well as the reform of marriage, divorce, employment, inheritance and other laws.

62. The Government had embarked on measures to redress the situation. The Tanzanian Law Reform Commission was updating laws on land tenure and affiliation proceedings in order to give women equal status. The courts had been championing the cause of women, especially in respect of inheritance of clan land, and High Court decisions had reasserted women's right to inherit land belonging to their parents for their own as well as their children's use.

63. In encouraging women to attain self-sufficiency, the Government, assisted by United Nations volunteers, UNIFEM and UNICEF, were working with women in rural areas to help their communities achieve self-sufficiency in food production and improve the social and economic well-being of women. On behalf of the Goverment and people of Tanzania, and especially of the women, she thanked UNIFEM and UNICEF for their inputs in such projects. In addition, with the technical support of ILO, the Tanzania Workers Union and Tanzania Sisal Growers, Spinners and Marketing Association were implementing a project for strengthening the self-help capacity of women in the sisal industry.

64. In future action, priority should be given to activities that would enhance women's participation and equality in politics and decision-making. The international community should also pay attention to the improvement of the situation of women at times of armed conflict. The five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies could provide reliable indicators of progress made, point out any obstacles that might exist, help to highlight any neglected areas of operation and check any tendencies to be either over-ambitious or too slack.

65. The silent voices of women and children should not be forgotten. Women in apartheid South Africa and in the occupied Palestinian territories deserved and had the right to be heard. In South Africa, women were in triple jeopardy by virtue of race, sex and class under the system of apartheid. Palestinian women had for four decades been subjected to a life of deprivation and hardship, a situation aggravated since the beginning of the intifada in December 1987. Although all

(Mrs. Butiko, Tanzania)

Palestinians in the occupied territories were suffering, the particular difficulties and responsibilities of Palestinian women were often not taken into account. As for the situation in South Africa, black women would continue to suffer until the apartheid system was abolished. Her delegation therefore appealed to the international community to increase its assistance to black women in South Africa and to step up its support for the struggle for the total eradication of apartheid.

66. Among the obstacles to implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and improving the status of women, the economic and social problems that many developing countries were experiencing were the most serious. So long as the economic situation remained unchanged, the aims and aspirations of women in the developing world could not materialize. The structural adjustment programmes imposed on many of the countries, far from improving the welfare of women, had had the opposite effect of exacerbating social problems and the situation of women in particular.

67. She reiterated Tanzania's determination to promote fulfilment of the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies.

68. Ms. GASPAR (Angola) said that, since important changes were under way in Angolan society, the promotion and equality of women must be added to the list of national priorities. Two main obstacles stood in the way of full equality for women in Angola, the first being the absence of peace. The war had driven women from their lands, thereby preventing them from playing their twofold role of supporting their families and contributing to the agricultural economy. Especially in rural areas, they had been reduced to the status of virtual beggars.

69. Underdevelopment was the second major obstacle. High rates of illiteracy and child mortality, inadequate water and food supplies, hunger and poverty were symptoms that afflicted men and women alike. Women's participation was essential to the success of development policies, and efforts were being made to use their creative potential by integrating them fully into every aspect of economic life. Those efforts to promote and educate women should be seen as a productive investment, given the important role they played in educating future generations. Women were a component of all programmes and actions aimed at national reconstruction and further development of Angola, such as the Economic Reconstruction Plan, and particularly the Programme for the Reconstruction of the South of Angola.

70. Having regard to the conditions prevailing in her country, priority was being assigned, inter alia, to education, information and professional training, and in particular to the preparation of specific programmes for women in rural areas; to agriculture and food production; and to employment and support to entrepreneurial activity, particularly in training and credit. An action plan was being prepared, establishing goals to be attained and actions to be undertaken for increasing women's participation in the decision-making process.

(Ms. Gaspar, Angola)

71. The protracted war was undoubtedly the main obstacle to the normal and harmonious development of women and the family. Angolan women supported the important initiatives taken by the Government in its search for peace. Her delegation thus welcomed the adoption of the Solar Amendment by the United States Congress, suspending United States aid to UNITA for three months. With or without peace, with or without UNITA, the process of phasing in a multi-party system and the market economy was already irreversible. The social, political and economic reforms under way bore witness to the Angolan people's longing for peace. In conclusion, she appealed to the international community to heed the plight of the Angolan people, particularly in the areas most affected by the war. A call must be made for an end to the massacres, maimings, and senseless destruction of goods and infrastructures, and to other acts of terrorism committed by UNITA against defenceless populations.

The meeting rose at 8.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 30 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. SOMAVIA	(Chile)
later:	Ms. COOMBS	(New Zealand)
later:	Ms. ZINDOGA	(Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B, A/45/38, A/45/202, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/230, A/45/254, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/426; A/C.3/45/5)

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1. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) thanked delegations for their suggestions, advice and constructive criticism, which broadened and enriched the debate on the advancement of women and guided the work of the Secretariat. The Division for the Advancement of Women was trying, thanks to the permanent dialogue that was being established at intergovernmental and expert meetings, to get as close as possible to the everyday reality of women's lives.

2. Replying to questions about the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, she explained that the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/45/489) was brief because the rules limited such documents to 24 pages. The report in document E/1990/25 was more detailed, however.

3. Replying to delegations that had expressed concern that the interregional consultation on the role of women in public life might constitute a preparatory meeting for the 1995 world conference, she recalled that paragraph 69 of document A/45/489 stated that the consultation would be a preparatory activity to the world conference. That document also stressed that the theme of equality in political participation and decision-making was extremely important for the advancement of women. It was essential for women to participate at all levels - local, municipal and national - in political decision-making.

4. The Commission on the Status of Women had considered the question of the venue of the 1995 world conference on women at its thirty-fourth session. On that occasion it had been proposed that for financial reasons the conference should be held at Vienna so as to take advantage of the services offered by the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution E/1990/12, had requested the Secretary-General to estimate the costs of preparing and convening the world conference, with primary emphasis on economy. The Council had thus had before it a statement of financial implications (E/1990/25/Add.1) based on the assumption that the world conference would be held at Vienna for five working days and would be provided with conference services in all the official languages. Many consultations had taken place in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, but no other proposal concerning the venue of the conference had been made.

(Mrs. Sellami-Meslem)

5. Lastly, she recalled that the Secretariat was determined to preserve the unanimity concerning the advancement of women that had been achieved since the Nairobi Conference.

6. Ms. McLENNAN (United States of America), referring to accusations that the Secretariat had not followed established practice and had failed to consult Member States before deciding on the venue for the 1995 world conference on women, recalled that the Secretariat had had many contacts on the subject with Member States during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Her delegation, which was firmly committed to the principle of geographical rotation for the holding of major conferences, noted that no Government in either of the two regions that had yet to host a world women's conference had offered to host the 1995 conference. The Commission on the Status of Women would have to decide on the venue of the conference at its thirty-fifth session so that the host Government could make all necessary arrangements for its preparation. Since there were no other proposals, the United States supported the offer by the Austrian Government to host the 1995 world conference. If other offers were forthcoming from countries in one of the two regions in question, the Commission would consider them at its thirty-fifth session.

7. Ms. RAYMOND (Canada) said that, as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, Canada supported without reservation Mrs. Sellami-Meslem's statement concerning the 1995 world conference. Consultations on the matter had taken place at the thirty-fourth session of the Commission. Canada was firmly committed to the principle of geographical rotation but, in the absence of any other proposal, it took note of the offer by the Austrian Government. It recommended that the question of the venue of the 1995 conference should be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its general discussion of agenda items 101 and 102.

AGENDA ITEM 94: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (A/45/523, A/45/590, A/45/640; E/CN.4/1990/9/Rev.1)

AGENDA ITEM 95: NEW INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORDER (A/45/524, A/45/587)

AGENDA ITEM 100: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. B; A/CONF.144/28; A/45/203, A/45/205, A/45/207, A/45/216, A/45/222, A/45/225, A/45/254, A/45/264-7, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/272, A/45/275, A/45/280, A/45/324, A/45/338, A/45/381, A/45/629)

9. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider agenda items 94, 95 and 100.

10. Mr. ESSAAFI (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) introduced the Secretary-General's report on humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations (A/45/587). In emergencies, much depended on the rapidity and efficiency of the response and the main responsibility for organizing that response rested with the Governments of the countries concerned, assisted by their regional and local authorities as the case might be.

11. Experience had shown, however, that in the case of major disasters, Governments were often unable to mobilize adequate human and material resources by themselves. It was therefore essential for them to facilitate access to the disaster sites, and likewise the work of experienced relief teams. Over the years, United Nations agencies and many non-governmental organizations had developed a quick and efficient response capacity to deal with disaster situations, which had undoubtedly helped them in many cases to reduce the death toll and the material damage.

12. The arrival of relief teams should not be delayed by red tape. At the same time, relief teams needed to be organized in an efficient manner, in close co-opertion with the authorities concerned. That delicate balance between speed and efficiency was at the heart of General Assembly resolution 43/131, on the implementation of which the Secretary-General had submitted a report (A/45/587). The report contained the results of exchanges of views which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) had conducted on that issue with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Governments. It also offered practical solutions for enhancing the efficiency of disaster relief and suggested that a seminar or colloquium should be organized at which Member States, the United Nations system and NGOs might further exchange views on the issue.

13. All too often, NGOs were perceived as foreign organizations which intervened when a disaster struck a given country. Some NGOs, however, such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, were continuously represented at the local level and co-operated on a daily basis with their Governments on a wide range of issues. In many countries, international NGOs likewise had permanent representation and their personnel were often recruited locally. Their assistance in disaster situations could be invaluable, although it was of course no substitute for well-organized specific skills available in the country. The United Nations system, and UNDRO in particular, was uniquely placed to facilitate contacts between affected Governments and NGOs and to ensure that duplication and wastage were avoided. In that connection, UNDRO's information system could provide basic and reliable information to the outside world on the characteristics of the disaster, the extent of the damage and the need for assistance.

14. By definition, humanitarian assistance knew no boundaries and should be above political consideration. Despite preventive measures, there would still be many disasters in years to come that would have to be dealt with efficiently and expeditiously while respecting the sovereignty of affected countries.

15. Ms. Coombs (New Zealand) took the Chair.

16. Mr. PACE (Director of the Legislation and Prevention of Discrimination Branch of the Centre for Human Rights) said that, under agenda item 94, the Third Committee had before it such important issues as the right to development, the right to own property and the development of public information activities in the field of human rights.

17. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report on the work of the Organization, "Resolution of conflicts, observance of human rights and the promotion of development together weave the fabric of peace; if one of these strands is removed, the tissue will unravel". The right to development was one such strand and a prerequisite for the effective enjoyment of human rights, just as the latter was a prerequisite for sustainable development. The idea that the two were interdependent was not new: it was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and had been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in 1986 in the Declaration on the Right to Development. It was to promote the implementation of the Declaration that the Centre for Human Rights had organized, in January 1990, a Global Consultation on the Realization of the Right to Development as a Human Right in which 25 experts, many of them from developing countries, had participated. The conclusions of the Consultations dealt with the content of the right to development as a human right; human rights and development strategy; obstacles to the implementation of the right to development; and criteria which might be used to measure progress. Recommendations for action had been formulated for States, NGOs and the international community. The Consultation had emphasized the role of democracy at all levels and the importance of participation.

18. The question of the right to development had also been considered by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which, at its fourth session, had adopted on 1 February 1990 a general comment aimed at promoting respect for economic, social and cultural rights within the context of international development co-operation. In that connection, the Committee had formulated two general principles: first, that human rights were indivisible and interdependent and, second, that development co-operation activities did not automatically contribute to the promotion of respect for economic, social and cultural rights. In many cases, the development activities had later proved counter-productive to human rights. Accordingly, the Committee had drawn attention to the need for the appropriate United Nations agencies to recognize the intimate relationship between development activities and efforts to promote human rights in general, and economic, social and cultural rights in particular. It had also recommended that a "human rights impact statement" should be prepared for all major development co-operation activities, that project and other personnel should receive training in human rights standards and principles, and that at each phase of a development project, due account should be taken of the rights set forth in the International Covenants on Human Rights instruments.

19. The suggestions by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the conclusions of the Global Consultation had been brought to the attention of the various United Nations bodies dealing with development issues. He himself had submitted them to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the

(Mr. Pace)

International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and to the ACC Task Force on Long-term Development Objectives. The increasing importance which the United Nations attached to such issues as development, debt and the net transfer of resources from poor to rich countries, and its recognition of the role of human rights in that context, had emerged clearly at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and at the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The question now was how to promote human rights, at the operational level, in the development process. When he had raised that question in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole and the ACC Task Force, he had suggested that a dialogue should be instituted within the United Nations system on how to integrate human rights into the formulation and evaluation of development projects. It might be appropriate for the Centre for Human Rights to convene an inter-agency consultation for that purpose, to be held in 1991. The dialogue on that subject with non-governmental organizations, particularly NGOs in developing countries, should also be strengthened. A preliminary meeting with NGO representatives could be held for that purpose.

20. Turning to the other issue before the Third Committee under agenda item 94, namely, the right to own property, he recalled that in recent years, the General Assembly had been considering how respect for that right contributed to economic and social development and to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. At its forty-third session, in particular, the General Assembly had sought the views of Member States, specialized agencies and other competent bodies of the United Nations system and had suggested that they address, in particular, the right to own personal property, including the residence of one's self and family, and economically productive property, including property associated with agriculture, commerce and industry.

21. As demonstrated by the report on that topic currently before the General Assembly (A/45/523), the right to property as a means of contributing to development and to the enjoyment of human rights was an extremely complex question that touched upon a wide spectrum of activities. It was therefore an appropriate time to commission an expert study to achieve a synthetic overview of those issues and their interrelationship.

22. With regard to the development of public information activities in the field of human rights, he noted that information and education were the two central components of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights launched by the General Assembly in December 1988. The system-wide co-ordination of activities in those two areas was one of the essential tasks of the Centre for Human Rights, whose work was enhanced by the growing co-operation of Member States and of non-governmental organizations.

23. As indicated in the relevant report (A/45/590), the activities to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms fell into five major categories: (a) preparation and dissemination of public information and reference materials; (b) workshops, seminars and training courses; (c) fellowships and internships;

(d) special human rights observances; and (e) promotional activities. In the context of its programme of information materials, the Centre had produced a number of fact sheets, the latest of which dealt with the rights of the child and with arbitrary executions. The demand for such publications was rapidly growing, and in some cases they had been translated into non-official languages. In addition, three issues of the Newsletter on Human Rights had appeared in 1990, and a fourth was in the process of being published.

24. The issue of the Bulletin on Human Rights focusing on the application of international human rights instruments had been published. Other issues dealing with special and ad hoc procedures in the area of human rights, and with the role of non-governmental organizations, were being printed. Also under preparation were issues on the rights of the child, on human rights and humanitarian law, and on human rights and refugees.

25. By undertaking a number of workshops, training courses and seminars in virtually all parts of the world, the Centre for Human Rights had moved a step closer to the long-term goal of establishing a universal culture of human rights. In addition, in keeping with its co-ordinating role, the Centre had convened a meeting of all specialized agencies and other United Nations organs in March to review current activities in the areas of information, education, technical assistance and training in the field of human rights, and thereby to promote its co-operation with organs such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Centre for Human Rights had also increased its co-operation with regional institutions outside the United Nations system, such as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights of the Organization of African Unity, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the Council of Europe. In addition, the Centre had actively supported the establishment of two new regional human rights institutes, one in Banjul for the African region and one in Tunis for the Arab region. Finally, the Centre had strengthened its co-operation with human rights institutions in San José, Costa Rica, in Strasbourg, France, in San Remo, Italy, and elsewhere.

26. Consultations between the Centre and non-governmental organizations, within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, had been held in both Geneva and New York. New co-operative endeavours were being explored with such organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists.

27. With the assistance of the Department of Public Information, the Centre's staff had given radio and television interviews, as well as press conferences. Exhibits on human rights had also been organized, most recently on United Nations Day, and had attracted thousands of visitors. Finally, he was pleased to announce that, on 16 November 1990, the second series of human rights stamps, depicting articles 7 to 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, would be issued in Geneva, New York and Vienna.

(Mr. Pace)

28. With regard to agenda item 95, he recalled that the United Nations, since its inception, had concerned itself with responding to the needs of the victims of tragedies throughout the world on a non-political and humanitarian basis. That concern had prompted the creation of the International Refugee Organization, which later became the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, currently known as UNICEF. The community of States had assigned a key role in the area of humanitarian action to non-governmental organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, co-chaired by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and H.R.H. Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. The Commission was to be given credit for important studies on such agenda items as indigenous populations, street children and the disappeared.

29. The United Nations had helped to broaden the range of international instruments dealing with persons who found themselves in difficult humanitarian situations, notably by adopting the Conventions on the status of refugees and on the status of stateless persons, and by triggering the process which had led to the drafting of the two 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention of 1949.

30. However, recognizing the need to establish an international framework which fully incorporated existing instruments relating to humanitarian questions and which addressed other areas which were not yet adequately covered, the General Assembly had included in its 1981 agenda an item entitled "New international humanitarian order". Since that time, the General Assembly had considered, inter alia, reports on the subject prepared by the Secretary-General and reflecting the views of Governments, the specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues. On the basis of those reports, at its forty-third session, the General Assembly had adopted two resolutions (43/129 and 43/130) on, respectively, the new international humanitarian order and the promotion of international co-operation in the humanitarian field. The report currently before the Assembly (A/45/524) had been submitted pursuant to those resolutions.

31. Mr. VETERE (Deputy Director in charge of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Secretary of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders), introducing agenda item 100, said that the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had been held in Havana from 27 August to 7 September 1990. That Congress had seen the adoption of more instruments and resolutions than all the previous United Nations congresses combined. Those results could be credited to Governments; to the relevant professional and non-governmental organizations, which had made many substantive contributions; and to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, which had organized numerous preparatory meetings and had prepared comprehensive documentation on all of the issues considered at the Congress.

(Mr. Vetere)

32. The resolutions adopted at the Eighth Congress reflected the willingness on the part of Governments, represented at a very high level, to find a common ground on complex and often very controversial matters. Clearly, that had been made possible by the positive atmosphere created by the generous hospitality of the host country.

33. The Congress had dealt with a range of important and, indeed, critical issues that were at the forefront of current world concern: terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and the links existing both between those issues and with other dangerous phenomena, such as corruption, violence and money laundering. It had focused on: the need for crime prevention and more effective and humane justice in the developmental context; ways of reducing the social and material costs of crime; the rights of victims and offenders; measures to combat juvenile delinquency and to improve juvenile justice; and better ways of managing justice systems, including computerization. The Congress had adopted a total of 46 resolutions by consensus, 13 of which were currently before the General Assembly for approval. The resolutions sought to foster mutual assistance in criminal matters, transfer of criminal proceedings, extradition, prevention of crimes against the environment and cultural heritage, restrictions on the use of firearms by law enforcement officers; to enhance the role of lawyers and prosecutors; and to promote alternatives to imprisonment.

34. A consensus had emerged at the Congress on the need to ensure that crime did not pay and to strengthen international co-operation to that end. The importance of taking urgent action had been emphasized in view of the world-wide increase of crime. Indeed, crime rates were growing faster than any other social indicators. The cost of crime to individuals and societies continued to rise, and in many parts of the world transnational crime syndicates were challenging the legitimate authorities and making large segments of the economy dependent on illegal activities.

35. Criminal justice was therefore indispensable for the protection of society and must be administered in such a way as to ensure individual freedoms and human rights and maintain internal peace and security, conditions that were essential for sustained development.

36. The important lesson learned at the Congress was that in the age of transnational crime, only a common strategy could help to combat the global scourge of crime. The model treaties on criminal justice matters were a step in the right direction.

37. On the whole, delegations had welcomed the new instruments; they had expressed their belief that the directives of the Congress would improve their countries' ability to bring national and transnational crime under control and their conviction that the United Nations had a crucial and irreplaceable role to play at a time when crime was acquiring international dimensions. In that context, the Congress had endorsed the conclusions of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control concerning the need to create an effective international crime and justice

(Mr. Vetere)

programme. The outcome of the Eighth Congress was therefore most encouraging. However, the resolutions adopted had yet to be implemented, and that required an act of will. Urgent action was needed, because any delay might cause criminals to conclude that crime did pay.

38. But without adequate resources, the United Nations could not meet the priorities set by the Member States. At the current time, the secretariat of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch could undertake no additional tasks unless its budget was increased. Despite limited resources at all levels, a number of urgent activities must be undertaken in 1991 and reported on to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control in early 1992. Basically, what was at issue was the priority of the United Nations programme in the area of crime prevention.

39. Immediate and resolute action must be taken, bearing in mind that inactivity would have grave consequences for the future of nations and the very lives of countless individuals.

40. Mr. MEZZALAMA (Italy), speaking on agenda item 100, said that Italy was currently carrying out a reform of existing criminal proceedings and creating new legal means for combating large-scale crime. A new criminal code had come into force in 1990, and two important new laws had been added to legislation on the prevention and control of organized crime, one to combat the mafia, the other to deal with drug trafficking.

41. In that context, the Italian Government had taken into consideration the possibilities offered by international co-operation, which was indispensable for the success of Italy's crime-control efforts. Countries must make use of all the resources offered by the United Nations, and the programme in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice must become one of the Organization's top priorities.

42. Among the topics dealt with by the United Nations, his Government attached particular importance to the subject of the death penalty. Owing to its legal traditions and ethical and cultural values, Italy had always supported United Nations efforts to do away with capital punishment and therefore welcomed the adoption of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (General Assembly resolution 44/128). The abolition of capital punishment must also be considered within the framework of current developments in penal practice, which reflected a growing trend to more humane and rational criminal sanctions.

43. His delegation recognized, however, that other Governments had different views on the subject. It hoped that efforts to explore the possibility of United Nations initiatives to encourage national actions that were in line with the spirit of the Optional Protocol, such as the decreeing of a temporary moratorium on capital punishment, would be continued.

(Mr. Mezzalama, Italy)

44. On the whole, his Government was pleased with the results of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The only negative note had been the Cuban authorities' refusal to permit a number of representatives of one NGO to participate in the work of the Congress. Under its commitments to the United Nations, Cuba should have encouraged the broadest possible participation of the NGOs concerned.

45. In keeping with previous practice, the Eighth Congress had continued the efforts to render more humane the administration of criminal justice and the activities of law enforcement agencies and had examined those questions in the light of the need to ensure respect for human rights. The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures were excellent examples of such efforts. His Government was even more satisfied that, in keeping with the guidelines drawn up by the Milan Plan of Action, the Congress had worked out an outstanding set of instruments to combat transnational crime. That twofold approach, covering both respect for human rights in crime prevention and criminal justice and international co-operation in controlling serious crimes, particularly transnational ones, should be a constant feature of United Nations action and was reflected in the various model treaties adopted at the Congress.

46. The most important decision of the Eighth Congress was therefore the recommendation that the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly should adopt a draft resolution entitled "Review of the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice". The question had been on the agenda since the Seventh Congress. The Governments and experts concerned looked forward to a carefully studied and well-structured plan of action and to concrete and practical proposals. Apart from that, the review process did not seem to have contributed much more in additional resources or rationalization.

47. The Italian Government was aware that the question of financing would have to be studied. However, financial limits should not prevent countries from trying to reach agreement on a more rational programme which would be likely to facilitate the gathering of resources, especially extrabudgetary resources. The operations envisaged in the draft resolution - the establishment of an intergovernmental working group, the convening of an early ministerial meeting and, possibly, the elaboration of a convention where the main lines of the reformed programme would be reflected - seemed adequate for developing the content, structure and dynamics of the programme and gaining the support of Member States. Italy was ready to participate actively in those measures which might be based on the report of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control entitled "The need for the creation of an effective international crime and justice programme" (E/1990/31/Add.1).

48. Three points should be taken into account in preparing the programme. The exceptionally high number of resolutions adopted at Havana showed the success of the Congress and the weakness of the programme. The new programme should focus first of all on an effective mechanism for setting priorities and deciding

(Mr. Mezzalama, Italy)

operational procedures and for periodic checking that operations were in line with the priorities established. With all due caution, the Italian Government would not be opposed to studying changes in the current composition and status of the bodies involved in the programme, so as to provide a sound intergovernmental basis for establishing priorities.

49. In connection with the standards and guidelines adopted by earlier congresses and other bodies, the new programme should involve procedures for ensuring their implementation at regional and national levels and for reliable monitoring of their impact.

50. The elaboration of normative instruments had so far been, if not the exclusive, at least the most prominent result. Without prejudice to the role of the congresses in the context of the programme, Italy was of the opinion that it was time to recognize the relevance of other possible United Nations action in the crime field. The new programme should place more emphasis on technical and other assistance to Member States and the exchange of information. The Italian Government's support for the United Nations crime-prevention programme depended on the prospects offered by the reform process, which should start immediately, in accordance with the recommendations of the Havana Congress.

51. Mr. JONES (Australia) said that the Eighth Congress had been the most productive to date. Australia had always pressed strongly for the adoption of practical guidelines for administrators responsible for crime prevention and control, and in that respect considered that the Eighth Congress had achieved a great deal. Its only reservation was the apparent breach of the United Nations rules on participation and rules of procedure of the Havana Congress when three Cuban citizens representing the International League for Human Rights had been prevented from participating in the Congress.

52. In its recent report (E/1990/31/Add.1) the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had presented a disturbing picture of crime, noting its alarming increase and monetary cost, which imposed an increasing drain on the economies of most countries. In that respect, extradition and mutual assistance were an essential part of international co-operation. The two model treaties, which Australia actively supported, were intended to be used as a basis for bilateral negotiations; States could modify them to meet their own needs. They could also provide a framework for broader international co-operation in criminal matters. Their use would ensure that persons could not escape a country's justice because they themselves, or the evidence required to convict them, were beyond the jurisdiction of that country. The protocol to the mutual assistance treaty would also ensure that criminals would not be able to enjoy the proceeds of their activities.

53. Australia had suggested that a programme should be set up to assist Member States in developing their legislation, in particular on extradition, mutual assistance, confiscation of the proceeds of crime and money laundering. At the Eighth Congress, frustration had also been associated with a number of proposals relating, among other things, to the determination of priorities for the

(Mr. Jones, Australia)

Organization's future crime and justice programme and the reassessment of current procedures, the prevention of urban crime, guidelines for the development of anti-violence strategies and the computerization of criminal justice. In connection with the Organization's programme of work, Australia believed that the development of practical measures and properly focused priorities, determined in accordance with appropriate criteria, was a matter of urgency. It was clear that resources were limited and must be used to the best advantage. The criteria in question could be the economic and social cost of the type of crime in question or the possibility of improving the efficiency of the criminal-justice system. Due regard would of course have to be given to the importance of balancing crime control with the maintenance of human rights.

54. It was not easy to determine priorities, because of the range of disciplines involved, the fragmentation that characterized the criminal-justice system in many countries and the often conflicting objectives pursued by the different areas and interests that made up the system. Priority might therefore be given to preparing a list of measures for communication and consultation between the various criminal-justice sectors. Another approach would be to conduct surveys among practitioners and experts to ascertain what they considered priority issues.

55. In that context, note should be taken of the priority areas identified in the report of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control (E/1990/31/Add.1). The list included organized crime, major fraud and corruption, drug trafficking, terrorism, crimes against the environment, property crimes, violent crime and juvenile delinquency. To that list, Australia would like to add improved criminal-justice co-ordination and economic and corporate crime. It would be useful to consider developing a practical manual on measures to combat corporate crime, drawing on the experience of Member States. The manual could deal in detail with prevention and control measures, developing public awareness of the problem, improvement of criminal law and company law, evidentiary matters, the establishment of national regulatory commissions, standards of conduct, training and other matters.

56. In conclusion, he said that Australia would like to participate in the intergovernmental working group which the Congress had asked the Assembly to establish in order to elaborate proposals for an effective crime-prevention and criminal-justice programme.

57. Mr. COTIC (Yugoslavia), speaking as Chairman of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, said he also felt that the United Nations role in that area was very important and that its work programme in the field of crime prevention and control, in particular in the present circumstances, should receive priority attention. Some of the most serious forms of crime, such as economic crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, fraud, illegal arms trafficking, theft of works of art and cultural heritage, illegal industrial practices and criminal environmental pollution, were increasingly carried on across national boundaries. The monetary, human and social cost of crime had become incalculable.

(Mr. Cotic, Yugoslavia)

58. On several occasions, Yugoslavia had stressed the need for more effective international arrangements and programmes, including the strengthening of the Organization's capacity in that field. His country was very pleased that the large majority of Member States strongly supported the efforts of the United Nations not only to combat crime internationally but also to promote a fair, effective and humane criminal-justice programme, in keeping with international standards and respect for social values and human rights.

59. Among the results achieved in the past, Yugoslavia was particularly impressed with the international instruments on crime prevention and criminal justice. United Nations congresses had contributed greatly to the process of standard-setting and the Eighth Congress was no exception.

60. While new initiatives should be welcomed and universal principles and standards should continue to be formulated, Yugoslavia would, however, wish to see wider application of the instruments already adopted. Such an approach called for closer co-ordination and co-operation between the United Nations system, national institutes and non-governmental organizations, technical assistance and advisory services. The United Nations should also be provided with adequate staffing and resources to deal with the problems caused by crime.

61. The Eighth Congress had demonstrated the willingness of Member States to co-operate in a comprehensive crime-prevention and criminal-justice programme. In the past, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control had been appalled by the lack of a response to its repeated pleas and to the successive resolutions of United Nations policy-making bodies mandating the strengthening and upgrading of the United Nations crime and justice programme. The Congress had undertaken an entire review of the matter and had supported that Committee's recommendations contained in document E/1990/31/Add.1. It had also adopted a draft resolution to review the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice, which he hoped the Third Committee would also endorse.

62. Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe) took the Chair.

63. Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand) said that the product of the United Nations in the criminal-justice area involved a combination of the work of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Secretariat, the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control and the five-yearly congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders.

64. Her delegation paid tribute to the Secretariat and to that Committee for their considerable preparatory work, which had ensured the success of the Congress, and thanked the Government of Cuba for its hospitality. In her delegation's opinion, greater importance and more resources should be devoted to the crime-prevention and criminal-justice work of the United Nations and to its place within the social and human rights agendas because the last two elements constituted the bedrock upon which to build a better world.

(Ms. Coombs, New Zealand)

65. An important part of the congresses' work was the development of standards against which national policies could be measured. Among the instruments adopted by the Havana Congress, New Zealand had been particularly interested in the resolutions on domestic violence, urban crime, juvenile delinquency, the use of force and firearms by law-enforcement officials, co-operation and mutual assistance through training, the exchange of expertise and pre-trial detention. There were, however, a handful of standards that seemed to have slipped through the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control without careful scrutiny and others which had appeared at the last moment. Member States should be persuaded to exercise restraint on the number of draft resolutions they submitted.

66. Her delegation was also concerned over the question of follow-up action. The 40 or so directives sent from the Congress to the Secretariat, coupled with the latter's earlier mandates, surely could not be implemented without considerable rationalization and reallocation of resources.

67. The Congress resolutions were of two kinds: there was a handful that Member States were invited to adopt as separate Assembly resolutions and the others, the majority, which formed the bulk of the report of the Congress. New Zealand supported all those resolutions but feared that it was only through luck that some of them had been selected for consideration. Since the Secretariat was currently producing a compendium of United Nations standards and norms for crime prevention and criminal justice, all the significant documents emerging from the congresses would be available to a wider audience. The important point was the resolutions with political or financial implications were highlighted for separate attention by the General Assembly.

68. As far as the United Nations programme was concerned, two draft resolutions of crucial significance had been submitted by the Congress for adoption. The first was the draft resolution entitled "Review of the functioning and programme of work of the United Nations in crime prevention and criminal justice", calling for the establishment of a widely representative intergovernmental working group, which, on the basis of the addendum to the report of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control on its eleventh session (E/1990/31/Add.1), would elaborate proposals for the drafting and implementation of the programme. New Zealand would be interested in participating in that group, which her delegation understood would meet early in 1991. The draft resolution went on to advocate the convening of an early ministerial meeting to consider the report of the intergovernmental group and to consider also the possible need for a convention or other international instrument to develop the content, structure and dynamics of that programme, including mechanisms for setting priorities, securing the implementation of the programme and monitoring the results. While her delegation was not yet persuaded that a convention was needed, it supported the taking of some high-profile action on the programme.

(Ms. Coombs, New Zealand)

69. The other important resolution was entitled "Development of future procedures for evaluating the extent to which Member States implement United Nations norms and guidelines in criminal justice and crime prevention". In 1984, the Economic and Social Council had adopted procedures for the effective implementation of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, urging States to institutionalize those rules in their legal systems, to make use of technical assistance opportunities and to report periodically to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General, in turn, would publish his observations on those reports. Since the Economic and Social Council had, in recent years, adopted similar procedures for other norms and standards, New Zealand was uncertain of the exact nature of its reporting obligations. The whole system therefore needed rationalization and consolidation. That was an area in which the expertise of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control could be utilized, as proposed in resolution 29. The Committee was already working on the matter, but would not meet again until 1991. In the mean time, the resolution called for the convening of an ad hoc group of experts, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds, which would make recommendations to the Committee for the improvement and rationalization of the procedures. Her delegation supported that initiative.

70. The Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had special characteristics in the context of the United Nations. Her delegation appreciated the opportunity they provided for the exchange of information, the formulation of policies and the establishment of networks of relationships among criminal justice professionals. The value of the Congresses had been confirmed once again in Havana. The meetings involving representatives of foreign affairs, justice, police, internal affairs and social welfare departments, and of prison administrations, were very stimulating. They also emphasized the need for careful co-ordination and follow-up among all the departments concerned. Her delegation recommended that the members of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control should be sent to the Congresses, since their expertise would add another dimension to the Congresses.

71. It was encouraging to note that some 50 non-governmental organizations had been represented in Havana, and that nearly 400 individual experts had also participated in the Congress. However, her delegation regretted that a number of Cuban citizens accredited to a non-governmental organization had not been permitted to attend the Congress, in spite of interventions by United Nations officials and by the Secretary-General himself. The Non-Governmental Organization Forum had a major role to play, but feedback between it and official meetings were haphazard at best. Efforts should be made before the next Congress to find ways to better integrate the two groups of participants.

72. The amount of work the number of ideas generated by the Havana Congress were clear signs of its success. However, her delegation felt that there was scope for heightening the accessibility and relevance of the Congresses, and of the whole United Nations programme on the prevention of crime, to Member States.

73. Mr. PIRAGOFF (Canada) recalled that his country had participated in the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which had achieved impressive results on a variety of issues. More than ever before, crime was becoming a transnational problem, and international co-operation was required to combat it. The United Nations had a major role to play in that area. That was demonstrated in the resolutions adopted at the Congress, such as the one on the role of criminal law in the protection of nature and the environment, and the one on the prevention and control of organized crime. Furthermore, Canada welcomed the adoption of the model treaties on extradition and on mutual assistance in criminal matters, which would provide a useful framework for the negotiation and conclusion of bilateral treaties on those issues.

74. His delegation emphasized the effectiveness of a co-operative and multidisciplinary approach, which had produced significant results in areas such as crime prevention at the international, national and local levels. Canada had therefore supported the resolution on the prevention of urban crime, the guidelines for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and especially the resolution on domestic violence, which Canada had sponsored at the Congress.

75. With the internationalization of crime problems, the link between computerization and crime prevention became evident, as indicated in the resolution which Canada had sponsored on the use of automated information exchange to combat crimes against movable cultural property. However, the benefits of computerization must be tempered with the need to prevent computer-related crimes. Universal norms and guidelines were necessary to prevent such crimes, and Canada had introduced a resolution to that effect at the Congress.

76. The issue of corrections had been discussed as a separate agenda item at the Congress. The purpose of corrections was to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society. Canada had appreciated the adoption of resolutions on the management of criminal justice and the development of sentencing policies, of standard minimum rules for non-custodial measures, of basic principles for the treatment of prisoners and for pretrial detention, and of guidelines for research on non-custodial sanctions.

77. Raising the essential question of human rights, his delegation welcomed the adoption of resolutions on the basic principles of the role of lawyers and prosecutors, on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials, and on minimum rules for the protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty, since those resolutions would contribute to a better and fairer criminal-justice system.

78. As had been seen at the Eighth Congress standard-setting was one of the greatest achievements of the United Nations congresses. However, the United Nations did not have the resources necessary to make all the resolutions effectively operational, and that situation threatened to compromise its moral authority. In the future, Member States should concentrate more on adopting resolutions and undertaking activities that were practical and action-oriented. Fortunately, that trend had already commenced at the Eighth Congress. Canada had co-sponsored a number of action-oriented resolutions on such topics as

(Mr. Piragoff, Canada)

computerization of criminal justice, the use of automated information exchange to combat certain crimes, the development of United Nations criminal justice statistical surveys and implementation in general. Those resolutions would help to promote increased and effective participation by Member States in the work of the United Nations, at minimal cost to the Organization.

79. With regard to the resolution on the computerization of criminal justice, specifically paragraphs 2 to 9, which requested the Secretary-General to develop practical activities in that field, he recalled that the resolution, recognizing the financial difficulties of the United Nations, called for a system of constructive funding. In paragraph 1, the Secretary-General was mandated to prepare proposals for submission to potential donors in the governmental, intergovernmental and private sectors, in possible consortium, to provide such funding necessary resources. Canada was eager to see how the United Nations would deal with that proposal in the statement of financial implications which would be submitted to the Fifth Committee with the draft resolution. That innovative idea for co-operative financing of worthwhile projects should be carefully considered by the United Nations and by Member States.

80. A comprehensive review and restructuring of United Nations procedures in the field of criminal justice was necessary. Priorities must be set and resources must be adequately allocated. In a period of budgetary restraint, the Organization must rationalize the operation of its bureaucratic structures to make them more efficient. For that reason, Canada believed very strongly in the importance of implementing the conclusions of the Eighth Congress. Emphasizing the high level of expertise of the participants in the Congress, he urged the General Assembly to endorse the report of the Eighth Congress, and in particular to adopt, without any substantive changes, the draft resolutions to be presented to it.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.